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FILE

APR 12 1961

TO: INR - Roger Hilsman

FROM: FE - John M. Steeves

SUBJECT: National Intelligence Estimate on Implications of Chinese Communist Nuclear Capability

This bureau regards NIE-13-2-60, The Chinese Communist Atomic Energy Program, as one of the most significant among recent intelligence products. The NIE made clear the fact that it is no longer a question of whether Peiping is engaged in a nuclear weapons program, but only of when a detonation may be expected. The particular significance of the NIE was that it advanced the earliest date by which Peiping might be able to explode a nuclear device.

The implications of the NIE have been given considerable thought in FE, in S/P, and within Defense.

I believe that the Department's planning would be facilitated if NIE-13-2-60 could be followed by a further NIE which would attempt to predict the reperoussions, political as well as military, of a Chinese Communist nuclear detonation and of the subsequent acquisition of a nuclear military capability, emphasizing the impact in such areas as:

Sino-Soviet Relations.

Peiping's policy toward disarmament and test ban negotiations.

Policies and attitudes toward the Bloc and the West of non-Communist Asian countries, particularly Japan, India, and free China.

Chinese Communist political and/or military actions in Southeast Asia, Taiwan Straits, Korea, and elsewhere.

In connection

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In connection with the above, I believe it would be worthwhile to obtain a very brief statement as to whether the time range given in NIE-13-2-60 (paragraph 9) is still considered valid in the light of current Sino-Soviet relations, Chinese Communist economic difficulties, and any other possible new evidence. Presumably, however, Chinese Communist intentions and capabilities in the nuclear weapons program itself need not again to be gone into in detail at this time. Rather, what is needed now is to examine the broader implications of what was previously estimated.

Concurrence:

FE - Mr. Jenkins

CA - Mr. Lutkins

cc: S/P - Mr. Rice

FE:P.Colm:dp 4/11/61